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Appl. No. 10/624,887

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims

1. (Currently Amended) A vend mechanism for transferring articles to a receiving area of a vending machine, comprising:

a conveyor assembly having a plurality of conveyors at least one conveyor for conveying said articles in a substantially lateral direction and transferring the said articles to the said receiving area;

a conveyor operator engine, for driving the conveyors, and
a conveyor assembly orientation engine moving arrangement, the conveyor moving arrangement for moving the said assembly so that at least one of said conveyors in said conveyor assembly is in a conveyor to a transferring orientation in which operation of the one of said conveyors conveyor transfers one of the said articles to the said receiving area
wherein said conveyors in said conveyor assembly are oriented at angular positions about a central axis.

2. (Currently amended) The vend mechanism of claim 1, wherein the each said conveyor has a central longitudinal axis having an angular orientation, and, in moving at least one of said conveyors the conveyor to the transferring orientation, the conveyor assembly orientation engine moving arrangement changes the angular orientation of said conveyor on the

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said longitudinal axis.

3. (Canceled)

4. (Currently amended) The vend mechanism of claim 2, wherein ~~the conveyor~~
~~each said conveyor further~~ comprises a helical element rotatable about a rotational axis parallel to
the longitudinal axis of the conveyor, ~~the vend mechanism further comprising a conveyor~~
~~operator rotating the helical element about the rotational axis.~~

5. (Currently amended) The vend mechanism of claim 4, wherein a plurality of
articles are positioned on ~~the each said~~ conveyor, and ~~the said~~ conveyor operator engine
comprises an arrangement for rotating the helical element through an angle at which only one of
the articles is transferred to ~~the said~~ receiving area from said conveyor.

6. (Currently amended) The vend mechanism of claim 1, wherein ~~the at least one~~
~~conveyor comprises a plurality of conveyors, and the said conveyor assembly orientation engine~~
~~moving arrangement comprises an arrangement moving moves any selected one of the conveyors~~
~~conveyor assemblies to a transferring orientation in which operation of the selected conveyor~~
transfers one of the articles to a receiving area.

7. (Currently amended) The vend mechanism of claim 6,

wherein each of the conveyors in said conveyor assembly has a longitudinal axis, the longitudinal axes all lying in a conveyor assembly plane, and the conveyor assembly orientation engine moving arrangement moves the conveyors such that the longitudinal axes of the conveyors move about an axis perpendicular to the said conveyor assembly plane.

8. (Currently amended) The vend mechanism of claim 1, further comprising a plurality of conveyor assembly planes, wherein the at least one conveyor comprises a plurality of conveyors each having a longitudinal axis, each conveyor plane containing the longitudinal axes of a plurality of the conveyors, and

the conveyor assembly orientation engine moving arrangement moves the conveyors such that the longitudinal axes of the conveyors move about an axis perpendicular to the conveyor assembly planes.

9. (Currently amended) The vend mechanism of claim 8, wherein the said conveyor assembly planes are arranged one above another, and the conveyors in each said conveyor assembly each have a length, the length of the conveyor of one conveyor assembly plane being greater than the length of the conveyors of a conveyor assembly plane below said one conveyor assembly plane.

10. (Currently amended) The vend mechanism of claim 7, wherein ~~the conveyors said conveyor assembly further comprises a conveyor support plate and said conveyors are mounted on a said conveyor support plate and the conveyor moving arrangement comprises a structure supporting the conveyor support plate above a fixed surface.~~

11. (Currently amended) The vend mechanism of claim 10, ~~wherein the conveyor moving arrangement comprises further comprising~~ a bearing structure guiding the conveyor support plate for movement about said axis perpendicular to the said conveyor assembly plane.

12. (Currently amended) The vend mechanism of claim 7, wherein the conveyor assembly orientation engine further ~~moving arrangement~~ comprises a drive arrangement rotating the a conveyor support plate through a selected angle about said axis perpendicular to the conveyor assembly plane.

13. (Currently amended) The vend mechanism of claim 8, wherein ~~the said conveyors are mounted on a plurality of conveyor support plates, the support plates being fixed at a distance from one another, and the conveyor operator engine having a driving arrangement moveable between a retracted position, in which the drive element is out of engagement from the conveyor, and an extended~~

position, in which the drive element is in driving engagement with the conveyor moving arrangement comprises a structure supporting the conveyor support plates above a fixed surface.

14. (Currently amended) The vend mechanism of claim 13 further comprising wherein the conveyor moving arrangement comprises a bearing structure guiding the conveyor support plates for movement about said axis perpendicular to the conveyor assembly plane.

15. (Currently amended) The vend mechanism of claim 8, wherein the conveyor assembly orientation engine moving arrangement comprises a drive arrangement for rotating the conveyor support plates through a selected angle about said axis perpendicular to the conveyor assembly plane.

16. (Currently amended) The vend mechanism of claim 4, wherein the conveyor operator engine comprises a drive arrangement having a drive element movable between a retracted position, in which the drive element is out of engagement from the conveyor, and an extended position, in which the drive element is in driving engagement with the conveyor.

17. (Original) The vend mechanism of claim 16, wherein the drive arrangement also has a rotating shaft fixed to the drive element, the rotating shaft bearing a helical structure, and a fixed member engaging the helical structure whereby the rotating shaft moves parallel to its axis

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in response to rotation about its axis.

18. (Currently amended) The vend mechanism of claim 7, [wherein the conveyor operator comprises] further comprising a drive arrangement having a drive element, wherein the conveyor assembly orientation engine moving arrangement moves one of the conveyors into juxtaposition with the drive element, and the drive element is movable between a retracted position, in which the drive element is out of engagement from the conveyors, and an extended position in which the drive element is in engagement with said one conveyor.